



The President's Daily Brief

28 June 1972

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Communist forces have stepped up their activity in northern Military Region 1, with heavy ground and artillery attacks north and southwest of Hue.

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The North Vietnamese are rapidly completing their pipeline link with a recently expanded petroleum storage area in southern China. (Page 3)

West German Chancellor Brandt's commitment to call elections in November evidently reflects his belief that this is the only way to break Bonn's parliamentary deadlock. Such a course involves some political hazards. (Page 4)

Soviet party boss Brezhnev has issued a sharp new blast at US actions in Vietnam. (Page 5)

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VIETNAM

Communist forces have stepped up their attacks against government positions in northern Military Region 1. They have launched heavy ground and artillery attacks against South Vietnamese Airborne units near Fire Support Base Nancy in southern Quang Tri Province, and against Camp Evans in northern Thua Thien Province. Similar action was also reported southwest of Hue against government troops at Fire Support Bases King and Bastogne.

Early this morning, a large force of South Vietnamese marines and paratroopers, supported by artillery fire and allied naval shelling and air strikes, attacked enemy forces north of the My Chanh defense line.

Farther south, Communist units in the western highlands are keeping Route 14 from Pleiku to Kon-tum cities blocked, while on the coast in Binh Dinh Province enemy units are keeping up the pressure against government forces around Phu My District town. In the southern half of the country, enemy shellings against An Loc continue at the accelerated pace of last weekend. Skirmishes have occurred on the outskirts of the town and along Route 3 to the south.

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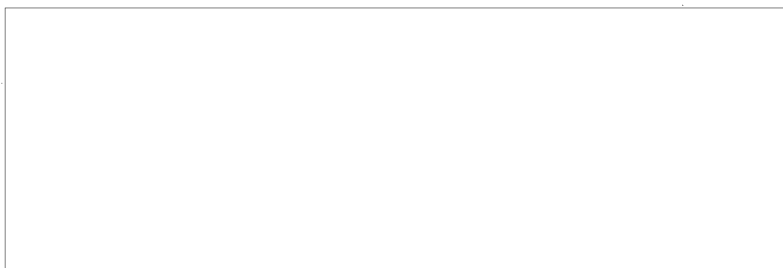
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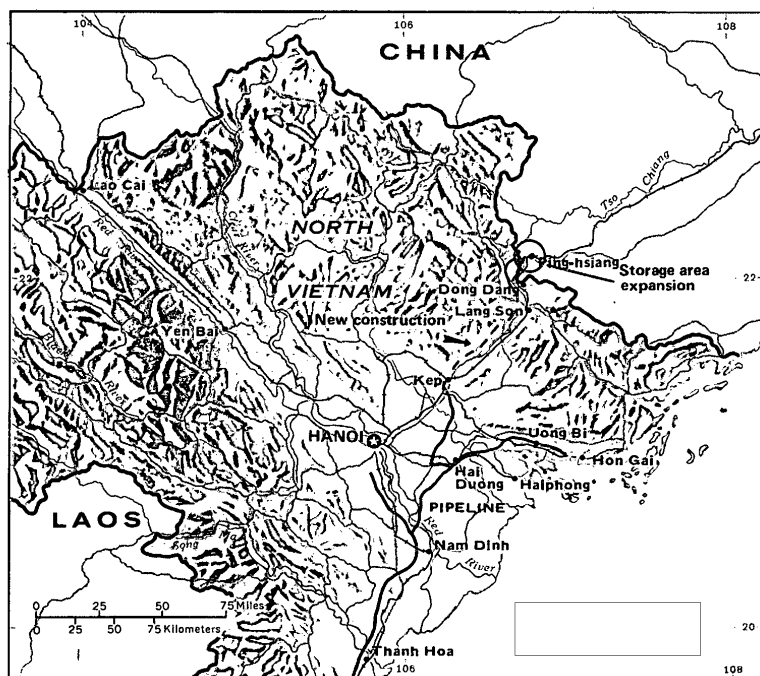
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VIETNAM

Photography of 22 June shows that the North Vietnamese are rapidly completing their petroleum pipeline link with China. Some 41 additional miles of pipeline have been constructed since 14 June between Dong Dang and Kep, where it joins the line extending north from Hai Duong.

When the new system is fully operational, petroleum supplies unloaded at the recently expanded Ping-hsiang petroleum storage area in China will flow directly into North Vietnam. This new system will thus give the North Vietnamese a complete pipeline link from China through North Vietnam to the DMZ and southern Laos.

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WEST GERMANY

Chancellor Brandt's public commitment last week to call elections in November evidently reflects a decision that resort to the electorate is the only way to break Bonn's parliamentary deadlock. In choosing this course, Brandt had to overcome the reluctance of parliamentary deputies for whom early elections could mean a loss of pensions

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There is still uncertainty, however, over how the early elections are to be arranged. Under the constitution, the chancellor cannot simply call them, but must arrange for the dissolution of his government either by resigning or by deliberately losing a vote of confidence. Both options are politically hazardous without the cooperation of the opposition, however, since the opposition has the right to try to elect a chancellor before the elections are formally called. So far, efforts to obtain such cooperation have foundered largely because Christian Democrat leader Barzel has been unable to persuade other major leaders to go along. Whatever course Brandt chooses, no action will be taken until the Bundestag reconvenes on 20 September.

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NOTE

USSR: Soviet party boss Brezhnev, speaking at a reception yesterday for visiting Cuban Premier Castro, issued his harshest criticism of US actions in Vietnam since the President's visit to Moscow. Brezhnev condemned the "blockade of DRV ports" and the bombing of "economic objectives, transport routes, and populated localities." The statement likely was intended to appease Castro, who has been critical of Moscow's restrained response to recent US actions in Indochina. The statement may also have been intended to shore up the Soviet position with the North Vietnamese.

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